



Fences are removed from Pardamat conservation area as part of MMWCA's efforts to restore wildlife migratory corridors.
Photo: Versatile photographers.

KENYA

MAASAI MARA LOCAL WORKS

The Greater Maasai Mara Ecosystem has defied many challenges that threaten its ecological integrity to remain an iconic wildlife conservation area and world-renown tourism attraction. Some of these challenges include poor settlement planning, fencing, land subdivision and sales. This has resulted in increased human-wildlife conflict and blocked migration routes. The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequential collapse of tourism have exacerbated these challenges and threatened the closure of these conservation hubs. The Maasai Mara Local Works project is a response to these challenges. The purpose of the project is to strengthen locally led development through advancing the community conservation model as an accelerator of economic growth in the local system. USAID is partnering with the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) to implement this project.

OUR WORK

The goal of the project is to enhance the socio-economic growth and well-being of the local communities in the Mara landscape through improving ecological integrity and economic value of the ecosystem.

Expected outcomes include:

- (i) capacity of local organizations to lead, own and manage locally led conservation and development strengthened.
- (ii) evidence-based conservation and development decision-making enhanced; and
- (iii) investment opportunities for alternative livelihoods identified and financed with private sector participation to foster self-reliance of local communities and conservancies.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Structured monthly lease payments for three northern conservancies secured. Lemek (25 years), Enoonkishu (15 years) and Olchorro (25 years) conservancies secured long-term leases which created an economic lifeline for these organizations that protect over 11 million hectares of land.
- Sixteen Mara Conservancies survived the pandemic through operational support from USAID.
- Supported landowners' awareness and engagement meetings on lease protocol and agreement.
- Contributed to the restructuring of the Greater Mara Management Company and the development of a company strategy that is more responsive to the needs of conservancies and grants them management services on a subscription basis.
- Acquired critical wildlife software licenses, configured ArcGIS hub site (a platform that facilitates communication with communities) through the One Mara Research Hub and curated Mara Datasets, making it possible to coordinate research in the Mara and provide evidence needed for decision-making.
- Contributed to women's economic empowerment by training five women-led community-based organizations on nature-based enterprises and other economic ventures.
- Restructured and registered the legal entities of five conservancies.

BUDGET: US \$2 million

DURATION: 2021 – 2023

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:
Narok County

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:
Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA)
Kenya Wildlife Trust (KWT)
One Mara Research Hub (OMRH)
Greater Mara Management (GMM) Ltd

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